

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 JUSE-00
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FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6338
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY
WHITEHOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY
DEA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 02865

E.O. 11651: XGDS-1
TAGS: SNAR, CO
SUBJECT: DISCUSSIONS WITH COLOMBIAN NARCOTICS OFFICIALS

WHITEHOUSE FOR BOURNE
DEA FOR BENSINGER
FROM: MFALCO

1. AS REPORTED EARLIER, MY FEBRUARY 16 LUNCH WITH JUSTICE MINISTER GOMEZ, ATTORNEY GENERAL SERRANO, AND DR. GARCES (INCB MEMBER) WAS CORDIAL AND INFORMATIVE. THE COLOMBIANS WERE FRANK ABOUT US-COLOMBIA NARCOTICS COOPERATION AND THEIR OWN POLITICAL VIEWS.

2. WHEN I ASKED WHAT EFFECT THE COMING ELECTIONS MIGHT HAVE ON OUR NARCOTICS COOPERATION, BOTH SERRANO AND GOMEZ ASSURED ME THAT THE GOC'S ANTI-NARCOTICS COMMITMENT WOULD CONTINUE, REGARDLESS OF THE ELECTION RESULTS. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, HOWEVER, NOTED THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS COMMITMENT MIGHT VARY, DEPENDING ON THE AMOUNT OF RESOURCES FUTURE GOVERNMENTS MIGHT BE WILLING TO EMPLOY.

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3. GOMEZ, SERRANO AND GARCES AGREED THAT TURBAY WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY WIN THE PRESIDENCY, ALTHOUGH THEY MADE CLEAR THEIR PREFERENCE FOR LLERAS. ALL THREE COLOMBIANS DESCRIBED TURBAY AS AN HONEST MAN, BUT THEY EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN THAT AS PRESIDENT, TURBAY MIGHT SURROUND HIMSELF WITH UNSCRUPULOUS PEOPLE, INCREASING THE LIKELIHOOD OF CORRUPTION.

4. REGARDING THEIR OWN POLITICAL FUTURES, SERRANO (A CONSERVATIVE) STATED THAT, UNLIKE GOMEZ (A LIBERAL), HE WOULD NOT BE LEAVING OFFICE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ELECTION OF THE NEW PRESIDENT, BUT WOULD PROBABLY BE RETAINED UNTIL NOVEMBER OR DECEMBER, OR PERHAPS AS LATE AS JUNE 1979. HIS DEPARTURE DEPENDS UPON THE TIMING OF THE ASSEMBLY'S SELECTION OF HIS SUCCESSOR. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SEEMED CERTAIN HE WOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT TIME TO ENSURE THAT HIS NEW ANTI-NARCOTICS ORGANIZATION WOULD BE FIRMLY ESTABLISHED. MOREOVER, HE ASSURED ME THAT THE NON-POLITICAL SELECTION PROCESS FOR A.G. ENSURED THAT HIS SUCCESSOR WOULD BE HONEST AND ABLE.

5. ATTORNEY GENERAL SERRANO EXPRESSED GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH OUR BILATERAL NARCOTICS PROGRAMS, AND WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED WITH THE FIREARM DECISION. HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE HELICOL CONTRACT BECAUSE OF NUMEROUS PERSONNEL PROBLEMS. ACCORDING TO SERRANO, SINCE THE RECENT WOUNDING OF ONE OF THEIR NUMBER, THE HELICOL CIVILIAN CONTRACT PILOTS HAVE BALKED AT UNDERTAKING DANGEROUS MISSIONS. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL NOTED THAT HIS DEPUTY, SR. GARCIA, WAS ABLE TO KEEP THE HELICOL PILOTS AT THEIR JOBS ONLY WITH DIFFICULTY.

6. SERRANO SAID HE WOULD PREFER TO CONTRACT DIRECTLY WITH
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THE DEFENSE MINISTRY, WHICH COULD PERFORM THE MAINTENANCE WORK AND FORMER MILITARY PILOTS WHO WOULD ACCEPT OPERATIONAL RISKS. ALTHOUGH HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE HELICOL CONTRACT HAS OVER A YEAR TO RUN, SERRANO APPEARED TO BELIEVE THAT IN VIEW OF THESE LABOR PROBLEMS, THE COMPANY MIGHT BE RECEPTIVE TO AN EARLIER TERMINATION OF THE CONTRACT.

7. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SHOWED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN USING BANKING LAWS TO NEUTRALIZE INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKERS. COLOMBIAN CITIZENS ARE PROHIBITED FROM MAINTAINING OVERSEAS BANK ACCOUNTS, BUT ACCORDING TO SERRANO MANY DO SO, PARTICULARLY IN THE U.S. HE WOULD LIKE TO COOPERATE IN LOCATING THE U.S. ACCOUNTS OF KNOWN COLOMBIAN TRAFFICKERS, WHICH COULD THEN HAVE THEIR ACCOUNTS SEIZED AND BE SENTENCED TO PRISON TERMS.

8. TREASURY DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARTHUR SINAI (CND DELEGATE) MET SEVERAL TIMES WITH THE COLOMBIAN DELEGATION, AND RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF COLOMBIAN OFFICIALS EXAMINING U.S. TREASURY INFORMATION ON COLOMBIAN ACCOUNTS, IN AMERICAN BANKS, PARTICULARLY IN FLORIDA. DETAILS OF CON-

SULTATIONS WILL BE ARRANGED BY TREASURY.

9. ON FEBRUARY 22, CND CHAIRMAN AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DESIGNATE OF THE UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL
(UNFDAC) BROR REXED; CND REP OF CANADA DR. DON SMITH;
A. G. SERRANO; MINISTER GOMEZ; SR. GARCIA; AND FALCO MET
TO DISCUSS GOC DESIRE FOR UNFDAC (AND PERHAPS CANADIAN)
TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN SUPPRESSING ILLICIT
MARIJUANA CULTIVATION AND IN DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE
DRUG ABUSE PROGRAM, WHICH WAS FULLY DESCRIBED IN BOOKLET

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6339

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY

WHITEHOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY

DEA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 GENEVA 02865

WHITE HOUSE FOR BOURNE

DEA FOR BENSINGER

FROM FALCO

PROVIDED BY SERRANO (COPY WILL BE POUCHED). REXED AND
SMITH WERE INTERESTED AND RECEPTIVE TO THE COLOMBIAN
PRESENTATION, AND PROMISED TO CONSIDER SENDING TECHNICAL
ADVISORS TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR ALTERNATIVE
INCOME PROJECTS IN GUAHIRA AND FOR PREVENTION PROGRAMS.
WITH REGARD TO ILLICT MARIJUANA CULTIVATION, I BRIEFLY
SUMMARIZED THE FEASIBILITY STUDY OF HERBICIDE ERADICATION
PROVIDED AT THE REQUEST OF THE GOC LAST SUMMER. SERRANO
THEN INDICATED THAT BECAUSE OF MANY COMPLEXITIES, HERBI-
CIDE ERADICATION WAS PROBABLY NOT PRACTICAL AT THIS TIME.
MAIN INTEREST OF GOC OFFICIALS APPEARED TO BE EXPLORING NEW
SOURCES OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL SUPPORT FOR DRUG
CONTROL EFFORTS, ALTHOUGH THEY REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED GRATI-
TUDE FOR U.S. COOPERATION. THEY DID NOT MENTION THE IM-

PENDING CHANGE IN GOC GOVERNMENT, PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY FEEL
IT WILL NOT AFFECT GOC COMMITMENT TO DRUG CONTROL. THE
MEETING ADJOURNED ON A POSITIVE NOTE, REXED INDICATING HE
WOULD SEND A GROUP OF EXPERTS TO COLOMBIA THIS SPRING IN
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RESPONSE TO THE OFFICIAL GOC INVITATION PERSONALLY DE-
LIVERED BY SERRANO AND GOMEZ. VANDEN HEUVEL

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